

Week 6: To The Heights

Week of Nov. 8

The Apex: On the Mass, Liturgy of the Eucharist

“I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From whence shall come my help? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” -Psalm 121:1-2

GOAL: The goal of this session is for the youth to come to a greater understanding of the Mass, in particular the Liturgy of the Eucharist. They will come to understand the faith as a progression towards the Eucharist and to see their encounter with God as an essential part in their mission to bring God out into the world and do His will.

MAIN IDEAS:

- The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.
- We approach the summit, the apex of our faith, when the priest comes to the altar and begins the Eucharistic Prayer.
- The very word “Mass” comes from the word “missio” which means “to be sent forth.” We receive Jesus in order to be strengthened to return back to the world and share the light of Christ with all those we encounter, accomplishing His will in our lives. (CCC 1332)

GATHER - Frassati Trivia:

Players answer true/false questions about Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati.

- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in Germany, true or false? (**false, Italy**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in the year 1901, true or false? (**true**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born into a poor family that was not well-known, true or false? (**false, his father was a well-known man in their town and they were a more wealthy family**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati had a great love of the Eucharist and said, “I urge you with all the strength of my soul to approach the Eucharistic Table as often as possible,” true or false? (**true**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati never made his first communion, true or false? (**false**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was sometimes called the “terror” because he loved to play good humored practical jokes, true or false? (**true**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was an average student, true or false? (**true**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati love climbing mountains with his friends, true or false? (**true**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati once gave his own shoes to a poor boy who had none, true or false? (**true**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati died at the age of 30, true or false? (**false, he was 24**)
- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was once quoted saying, “When God is with us, we don’t have to be afraid of anything,” true or false? (**true**)

CONNECT

- Many people spend their whole lives, and sometimes sacrifice their lives, in pursuit of the highest summits of the world. The Eucharist is the “source and summit” of the Christian life. Like great mountain climbers, we strive to reach the summit where we encounter Jesus Christ truly present.
- *Read one of the accounts of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36)*
- During this event, called the Transfiguration, the apostles see Jesus not just as a man but also shining with heavenly glory. The apostles were shown, in a profound way, that Jesus truly is God. Just like the apostles and many men of the Bible, we, too, are called by God to ascend a mountain, not a literal mountain but rather to seek the heights of holiness when we come to Mass every single Sunday.
- We approach the summit, the apex of our faith, when we begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the preparation of the altar and the gifts. While the altar is prepared, people from the congregation bring forward bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ as well as offerings of money that will be used in service of the church and the poor.
- The priest then begins the Eucharistic Prayer. During this prayer the priest acts as the person of Christ (in persona Christi) and offers up to the Father not only the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, but also our very lives, our prayers, and our efforts to grow more like Christ and share His love with others.
- The Eucharistic Prayer begins in an attitude of thanksgiving in what is called the preface. During this the priest joins all of our prayers with all the angels and saints in giving thanks for everything God has done. Then the whole community joins with all the heavenly powers singing the Sanctus, “Holy holy holy are you Lord God...”

- As the Eucharistic Prayer continues, the priest prays for the Holy Spirit to come down on the bread and wine in order to transform them into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus — this is called the epiclesis. After this, we hear the priest say words that may sound familiar to us if we read Scripture. During the Institution Narrative, the priest prays the same words that Jesus did the night that He instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper (“On the night before He was betrayed...,” “When supper was ended He took the cup...”).
- Next during the anamnesis, the whole Church celebrates the memorial of Christ — in particular His Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven. We as a Church make a Proclamation of Faith and the priest proceeds with words similar to, “In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you Father this life-giving bread, this saving cup...”.
- Toward the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest will start asking for the intercession of different saints in our Church. This point in the Mass is a reminder that communion is celebrated by the whole Church, both in heaven and on Earth. Recalling that we are joined by the angels and saints who have gone before us allows us to more fully understand the mystery of the Eucharist and reminds us of the men and woman we can look to as examples of how to live our lives.
- The Eucharistic Prayer is concluded with a final prayer where the priest proclaims the great glory of God (“Through Him, with Him, and in Him, all glory and honor is yours...”) and the whole community responds with a resounding “Amen.”
- It is important to remember that at this point Jesus is really and truly present in the Eucharist. The bread and wine might look the same on the outside, but their substance has truly been changed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ.
- It is during the Eucharistic Prayers that we are reminded of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross that saved us from all of our sins, and through this we are reconciled with God and brought back into relationship with Him.
- *Share a story about how you first came to believe in the Eucharist and how it transformed your life.*
- We need to make sure that our faith does not just become a series of checking off our duties as Catholics. When we receive the Eucharist, we should be transformed. St. Augustine says, “Become what you have received.” Every Sunday should leave us transformed. We are meant to become Christ in the world. If we look back at the story of the Transfiguration, Peter wanted to simply stay on the mountain top, forever in the glory of God. But Jesus tells Him that is the wrong idea; He says that they must go back.
- In the same way, we do not come to Mass to simply stay locked up in our churches forever; we, too, must go back down the mountain, leave Mass, and tell the world about the glory of God and how He has changed our lives. We receive Jesus in order to be strengthened to return back out to the world and share the light of Christ with all those we encounter, accomplishing His will in our lives.
- And the great news is that we are not alone. Not only is Jesus always with us and mysteriously present in the Eucharist to always fill us with grace and strength, but we have our community too.
- *Share a story about how a specific person or group of people have helped you to live out your faith.*

EXPLORE

Open in Prayer

Journal & Discussion

Ask teens to open their booklets to page 14 and complete the first two questions. Discuss.

- Why is the Eucharist so important?
- Why is the Eucharist called the “summit” of our faith?
- Looking back at the last six weeks, what are some things that you learned?

On the “To the heights” image in the booklet, ask them to write down what “to the heights” means to them now. Answer and discuss the last question on page 14.

- What are ways you want to reach the heights in your faith?
- How can we help each other reach those goals?

REFLECT

Final Sending

This semester we have learned all about reaching the heights of holiness through the liturgy and in particular the Eucharist, which is the source and the summit of our faith. We learned about the great example of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati who encouraged us to go “to the heights” not only by living our lives to the full and doing great things but also by following Christ and becoming who we were created to be. We are all called to climb the mountain of the Lord, to constantly prepare, train, and climb the mountains of holiness to learn more and more about God and what His will is for our lives. Blessed Pier

Giorgio Frassati said, “the higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ.”

The road may be narrow; it may be difficult to climb this mountain of holiness, but God has given us everything we need and desires for us to reach the holiness He has created us for. And every single Sunday He brings us the Eucharist which is our greatest gift and our greatest treasure. When we receive Jesus Christ Himself we are strengthened for the journey so we, too, can become holy.

Reminder Gift

Give the teen a carabiner & Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati medal.

Close in Prayer

LIVE IT

Clip the medal to your backpack or sports/activity bag, hang it up in your room, or put it anywhere where you will see it and be reminded to always go “to the heights” in your faith!